

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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Gorodomlya Island and Ostashkov

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SOURCE:

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FOOD SUPPLY

1. Food scarcities at Gorodomlya Island varied with the time of year. Bread occasionally was in short supply, especially in the months from May to July. Butter was frequently unobtainable. Fresh vegetables could be procured only in season. Meat, potatoes, and milk always were available. Flour was always very scarce except on national holidays. Though meat was obtainable, it was very expensive for the average Soviet citizen.
2. The usual meal was potatoes, gruel, and bread when available. Even in 1952, bread was in short supply.
3. Bread was baked from rye and wheat flour. Vegetables available in season included potatoes, cabbage, onions, cucumbers, and carrots. The area also produced cranberries; other berries grew wild. Salted mushrooms were usually eaten raw.
4. Meat sold on the market included beef, pork, and lamb. Fish was available in greater quantity, and was eaten in larger quantities than was

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meat; fish caught in Lake Seliger included pike and perch. ~~Shasta~~ fish was also sold. Preserved meat and fish also could be purchased.

5. Milk was sold in all sorts of makeshift containers. Raw milk was sold by local farmers. A roasted milk was sold in stone jugs and quite popular. None of the milk sold was pasteurized.
6. Sunflower oil was very plentiful and served as the principal fat in the diet.
7. Food shops and markets were never clean. An administrative organization in Ostashkov, known to me as Profsoyuz, set down regulations on cleanliness for food markets. Meat was inspected before sale on the market place, and presumably food markets were inspected, but I do not know the operation or how effective the control was.

HOUSING

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MEDICAL CARE

9. The island had a polyclinic which was located in a one-story wooden building, 10 m. by 25 m., to which institute personnel and their dependents applied for medical service. The staff consisted of two women doctors, who had the title of vrach; KISELOVA, 55 years old, and VASILYEVA, 33 years old; a woman dentist, 24 years old, and four nurses, one of whom was a midwife. The polyclinic had a reception room, a pharmacy, a small laboratory for blood tests of a very simple nature, e.g., blood sedimentation, three sick wards with two beds each, and one sick ward with four beds, and a bath with toilet. It had no roentgen apparatus but did have stethoscopes and heat lamps.
10. Diagnostic facilities were poor. All laboratory work was sent to Kalinin, although the Ostashkov polyclinic occasionally performed minor tests on blood, saliva, and feces. Because of their unreliability, the laboratories were not used to any extent. Three cases of cancer among the German people were not diagnosed properly. I believe that Moscow physicians who were consulted failed to recognize these cases, which involved the liver in one case, and the stomach in two other cases.

MEDICAL FACILITIES AT OSTASHKOV

11. Patients with non-routine problems were referred to Ostashkov. This city had a polyclinic in a two-story building which had fourteen rooms and a pharmacy. The staff included specialists in entomology, neurology, gynecology, dentistry, and ophthalmology. These

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specialists also worked in the Ostashkov hospital, which was a two-story building, 12 m by 40 m, staffed with specialists. The hospital had no water or sewage system because the city itself lacked these facilities. Two small barracks were used to confine infectious-disease cases, and for children and maternity care, respectively. In addition, Ostashkov had a leather factory which had its own polyclinic.

12. Care in the hospital at Ostashkov, which was the hospital for Ostashkov Rayon, was poor. Roentgen apparatus was primitive; X-ray photographs could not be taken because of the shortage of film, and because the city did not furnish power at all times. The surgeon was sometimes required to operate with illumination from a petroleum lamp. Food for the patients was usually brought in by their friends or relatives. Laboratory specimens, i. e., for infectious-disease diagnosis, were forwarded to Kalinin for examination. The Ostashkov hospital surgeon, who was Jewish, 50 years old, was quite capable. His wife was a neurologist and his daughter was an entomology specialist.
13. The Ostashkov city council had an official responsible for public health affairs in the city. I do not know details of his activities. I do not know how public health work was organized in the area.

VETERINARY SCHOOL

14. The city of Ostashkov had a veterinary medicine "institute" for kolkhoz workers. The course given lasted six months, and the students were about 18 years old. I have no information on the nature of the training offered at this school. There was also a veterinary pharmacy in Ostashkov.

INDUSTRIAL SAFETY

15. An official from Kalinin was responsible for adherence by the plant to safe working practices. Inspections were haphazard and little attention was paid to dangerous procedures. The factory directors were furnished with a percentage number which specifically designated the number of people who could be declared sick by the polyclinic doctors. This norm could not be exceeded.
16. Certain dangerous operations, e.g., workers who handled bromine, or did welding, or who were constantly before open ovens, were given special consideration. They earned one day's holiday for every month of such work, which could be accumulated and taken at one time. They also received one-half liter of milk per day from the workers' union at a reduced price. These workers, who were called Gift (poison) workers, actually did get these benefits.

BLOOD DONOR SYSTEM

17. I have no information on the existence of a blood donor system in the Ostashkov area.

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DISEASES

18. Tuberculosis was very widespread in Ostashkov. Treatment prescribed there was a high fat diet, and heat lamp treatment over a one-and-one-half year period. No streptomycin, PASA, neoteben, or similar products were available for treatment. Occasional cases of diphtheria were reported and typhoid fever also appeared from time to time.
19. Scarlet fever outbreaks occurred. I recall that nine cases appeared in adults in 1952. Treatment included confinement for fourteen days to the hospital in Ostashkov, which had a separate wooden barracks for infectious-disease cases. A serum was administered to these patients. Several of the sick suffered from arthritis and impairment of hearing as a consequence of the scarlet fever attack. Venereal diseases did not appear to be a serious problem in the area. I have no information on the extent of incidence of VD.
20. Dysentery, or non-specific intestinal disorders which produced severe diarrhoea, occurred occasionally. These cases were treated with disulfan (two tablets, three times a day) and "stomach" (zheludochnyy) tablets (two tablets, three times a day). Pneumonia was treated with injections of penicillin, which was always available, and sulfidin tablets (10 per day), which were frequently difficult to obtain.
21. Neuralgia, or arthritis, was treated by subjecting the patient to a cupping process, i.e., approximately twenty small cups were wetted with alcohol, the alcohol residue was burned, and the cups which had thus been evacuated were pressed on the skin so that they caused a suction at the point of application. The patients were also given high doses of vitamin B-1 and C, and teofedrin for pain relief. Application of sun-lamp treatment was also practiced.
22. Worm infestation was very widespread. A drug known as "sankoffein" was used to treat one type of worm parasite, but application was limited to one treatment per year.
23. All residents of Gorodomlya Island were required to receive an injection of a combined serum immunizing against scarlet fever, diphtheria, typhoid and paratyphoid fever, and typhus, in May of each year. This serum was injected between the shoulder blades in the back; it produced a severe pain and a fever which reached as high as 41°C.

ANIMAL DISEASES

24. Tuberculosis in cattle was common. We were advised to heat our milk before drinking it. I heard of no poultry disease, no erysipelas in pigs, no rabies. Glanders was considered to be a frequently encountered disease among horses. I do not believe that foot and mouth disease occurred in the area.

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BW AND CW

25. I have no information on this subject. I believe the island had a biological or a veterinary test station on it before 1941. Old rabbit cages and old incubators were left out in the open, apparently having been discarded when the test station was inactivated. The Soviets used the island for a military hospital during the war. There were graves of buried soldiers on the island who apparently had been patients at this military hospital.

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INSECTS AND ANIMALS

26. Anopheles mosquitoes were found in the area and many Germans suffered from malaria. I estimate that about thirty percent of the island population had malaria at one time or another. Every spring, usually in May, the Soviets examined the blood of the inhabitants for malaria infection. Akrikhin was available for the treatment of those suffering from the disease.
27. Flies were very numerous in the summer. Fleas and bedbugs were found everywhere, especially in the wooden houses. Lice were also seen but were not too annoying. DDT was available to combat these insects. A sugar and borax powder was also found to be effective in controlling the insects in the houses. No screens were supplied for the house windows in the summer.
28. I saw poisonous snakes on two occasions. One was about 80 cm long, the other 40 cm long. Other reptiles seen were harmless salamanders.
29. The island had many mice and very few rats. Traps were employed to catch the mice, which included gray house-mice, field mice, and shrew-mice. Ostashkov had many field rats, but no house rats. Many cats were kept by the community. Stray dogs were fairly common in Ostashkov.
30. Wolves in the area were dangerous. A child was once eaten by a wolf, and occasionally reports were heard of attacks on men by these animals. A wolf was shot on the island during our stay. Bears were fairly common in the area, and bear meat could be purchased in the market place.

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WATER SUPPLY

31. The public water supply was obtained from a well approximately 80 meters deep, which supplied about ten percent of the total water, and from a small lake on the island, which supplied about ninety percent of the water. The level of the water in this island lake was higher than that of Lake Seliger, in which Gorodomlya Island was situated, and I believe that its water came from subsurface springs. Its temperature was also warmer than that of Lake Seliger. It always contained plant growth. The water was pumped to a central tower from which it was led to the community buildings by piping. A small village on the island, Pervoye Maya, used wells as a source of water.

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32. The central system neither filtered the water supply nor subjected it to chlorination. Tap water frequently had small fish and slime in it. Each house wall bore a "regulation" which ordered the occupants to boil their water before drinking it.
33. The water supply was always sufficient for the community's requirements even in the summer. I cannot estimate how much water was consumed daily.

PLANTS

34. There were many poisonous varieties of mushrooms on the island. I never saw any other poisonous plants, but believe belladonna plants were found in the area. I never saw digitalis in the USSR.

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WASTE DISPOSAL

35. Each house in the community had running water and toilets connected to the central sewage disposal system. This system led to a ~~bioretaria~~ a wooden house containing three settling basins; from here the overflow trickled over the ground toward Lake Seliger, but I do not believe it reached the shore of that lake. The sewage was not decontaminated or purified. The small village was not serviced by the community sewage system, and outdoor latrines were employed by the people there.
36. Garbage was placed in garbage cans outside of the community houses. These cans were occasionally emptied, and the garbage was burned.
37. Night soil was used to a large extent in the Ostashkov area as fertilizer. The earth was fairly productive, and I believe that lake Seliger, in earlier times, had covered a greater area; upon receding it had left a fertile soil.

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